NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-5675 MARCH 30, 1978
DAVID LENT/JOHANNESBURG

SOWETO ELECTION CHALLENGE

ANNCR:

ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT LEADERS IN SOWETO, THE HUGE BLACK TOWNSHIP OUTSIDE JOHANNESBURG, HAS CONDEMNED GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO STAGE BY-ELECTIONS NEXT MONTH FOR A COMMUNITY COUNCIL. FROM SOWETO, VOA'S DAVID LENT SENDS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT:

VOICE:

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OF TEN, DOCTOR NTHATO MOTLANA, ON WEDNESDAY DENOUNCED THIRTY-EIGHT NOMINEES FOR SOWETO COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS AS CHARLATANS, OPPORTUNISTS AND POLITICAL HAS-BEENS. HE EXPRESSED HIS CONVICTION THAT THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF SOWETO RESIDENTS WILL REFUSE TO VOTE. REFERRING TO THE STAND TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE OF TEN, A GROUP OF PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE WHO JOINED TOGETHER LAST YEAR TO FILL A LEADERSHIP VOID, DOCTOR MOTLANA SAID:

TAPE: CUT ONE -- MOTLANA

"I HAVE NO DOUBT IN MY OWN MIND THAT THE PEOPLE WE REPRESENTED THEN AND STILL REPRESENT NOW HAVE NO DESIRE TO TAKE PART IN COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED."

VOICE:

DOCTOR MOTLANA AND THREE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN RELEASED FROM FIVE MONTHS' DETENTION. BUT SIX OTHER MEMBERS OF THE LEADERSHIP GROUP REMAIN IN JAIL WITHOUT TRIAL. DOCTOR MOTLANA REPEATED THE COMMITTEE JUDGMENT FORMULATED BEFORE ITS MEMBERS WERE ALL JAILED DURING THE GOVERNMENT SECURITY CRACKDOWN LAST OCTOBER, THAT THE LEGISLATION UPON WHICH THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS IS BASED IS SO

BADLY PUT TOGETHER, SO BADLY CONCEIVED AND SO BADLY MOTIVATED THAT IT OUGHT TO BE SCRAPPED. AND THEN, REFERRING TO THE MINISTER OF PLURAL RELATIONS OR BLACK AFFAIRS, DOCTOR CONIE MULDER, HE SAID:

TAPE: CUT TWO -- MOTLANA

"I AM CONVINCED THAT HIS DETERMINATION NOT TO SCRAP THE ACT SHOWS A LATENT DESIRE TO RETAIN CONTROL OF THIS COUNCIL IN HIS OWN HANDS. THERE IS NO DESIRE, NO WILL, NO WISH TO CONFER REAL MUNICIPAL STATUS, TO TAX, AS YOU SAY, TO LEVY RATES, AND SO ON."

ANNCR:

INSTEAD, THE COMMITTEE OF TEN WANTS A FULL-FLEDGED CITY COUNCIL TO RUN SOWETO WHICH DOCTOR MOTLANA SAYS ALREADY HAS ONE AND A HALF MILLION INHABITANTS.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- MOTLANA

"WE WANT POWER TO TAX, POWER TO IMPROVE THE PLACE OURSELVES. WE WANT POWER TO BORROW MONEY -- INTERIOR AND FROM OUTSIDE -- TO DEVELOP THIS PLACE."

VOICE:

DOCTOR MOTLANA SAYS THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT IS GOING TO FIND IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO CONTROL AND RULE INDIRECTLY BLACK AREAS LIKE SOWETO. BLACK YOUTH, HE SAID, IS IN REVOLT, AND MY OFFER TO THE GOVERNMENT, DOCTOR MOTLANA SAID, IS THIS:

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- MOTLANA

"AND UNLESS YOU CAN INVOLVE US -- THOSE WHO WORK BEYOND AND OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT-CREATED BODIES, YOUR CREDIBILITY WILL ALL BE NIL. AND YOU NEED US AS MUCH AS WE NEED YOU TO CONTROL SOWETO. WE SPEAK TO THE YOUTH OF TODAY, THE YOUTH THAT IS IN OPEN REVOLT. AND WE ARTICULATE THEIR ASPIRATIONS. AND THIS OUR OFFER TO THE GOVERNMENT. AND IF THEY INSIST ON PROMOTING THESE CHARLATANS, OPPORTUNISTS WHO ARE NOW OFFERING THEMSELVES FOR ELECTION TO THIS COMMUNITY COUNCIL, THEY'RE ASKING FOR ENDLESS PROBLEMS."

TEXT:

AND DOCTOR MOTLANA PREDICTS THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT STUBBORNLY GOES AHEAD WITH ITS PLAN TO STAGE BY-ELECTIONS ON APRIL FIFTEENTH, THE RESULT WILL BE MUCH THE SAME AS IN THE ORIGINAL ELECTIONS HELD IN FEBRUARY, ELECTIONS HE TERMED A FARCE. IN THE ONLY TWO CONTESTED WARDS, ONLY SIX PER CENT OF SOWETO RESIDENTS AUTHORIZED TO VOTE CAST THEIR BALLOTS.

GH/PY